

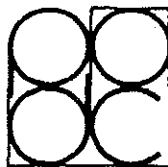
Bicentennial Building  
600 E Street, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-599

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
339-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127



PENNSYLVANIA  
AVENUE  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION  
425 13TH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

GENERAL CONSULTANTS

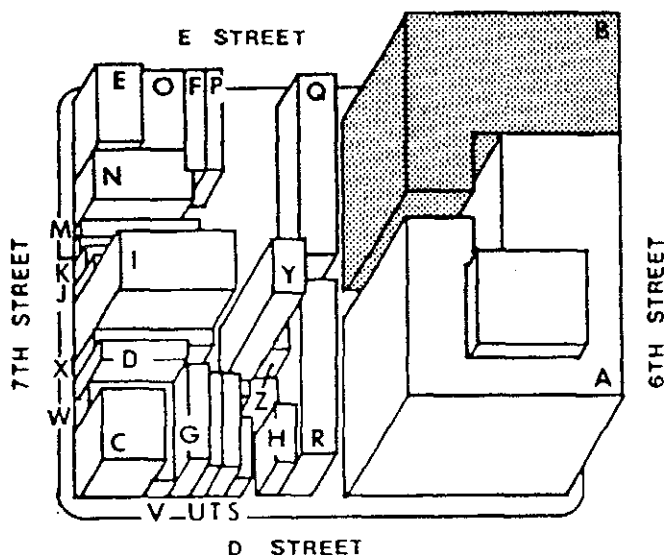
ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIANI  
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT  
DEVROUX & PURNELL  
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS  
DAVID McLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES  
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT  
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES  
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
339-

Bicentennial Building  
600 E Street, NW  
Lots 18, 21, 831, 834, 835, 838 and  
848



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 457, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 457, see HABS No. DC-597.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Bicentennial Building completely fills the U-shaped northeast quadrant of Square 457. Its six-bay Sixth Street (east) facade is one hundred twenty-eight feet long, while the eleven-bay E Street facade is two hundred thirty-three feet long. The west elevation faces the public alley, as do the western two-thirds of the south face. Along Sixth Street, the structure is contiguous with the Patrick Henry Building, which appears one story shorter due to the square's southward slope.

The ten-story building is clad in a flat brick wall punctured by a regular pattern of numerous small, vertical windows. Several devices supplement this otherwise undifferentiated pattern. First, the building's structural bays are expressed as voids between piers on the ground floor. These openings are glazed along Sixth Street and open to a covered pedestrian space on E Street. Second, narrow projecting piers flank each window at the eighth and ninth floors and terminate in a continuous narrow corbel table at the tenth floor line. Finally, the second bay from each end of the E Street facade is given special treatment. In these bays, the windows are grouped closely together; from the second through ninth floors each bay is recessed, and its windows are separated by continuous narrow brick piers.

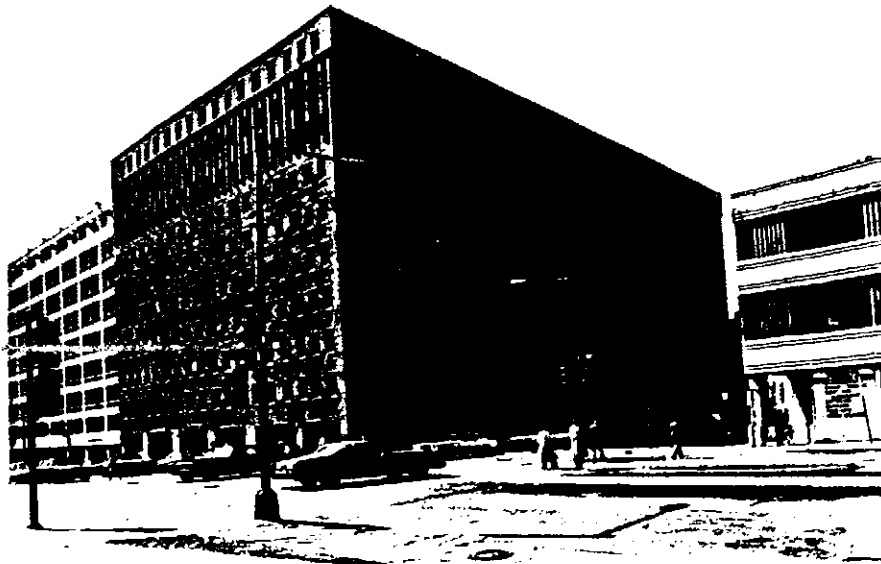
On the interior, the building has a central service core surrounded by flexible leasing areas. The building is used by a variety of government agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Energy.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

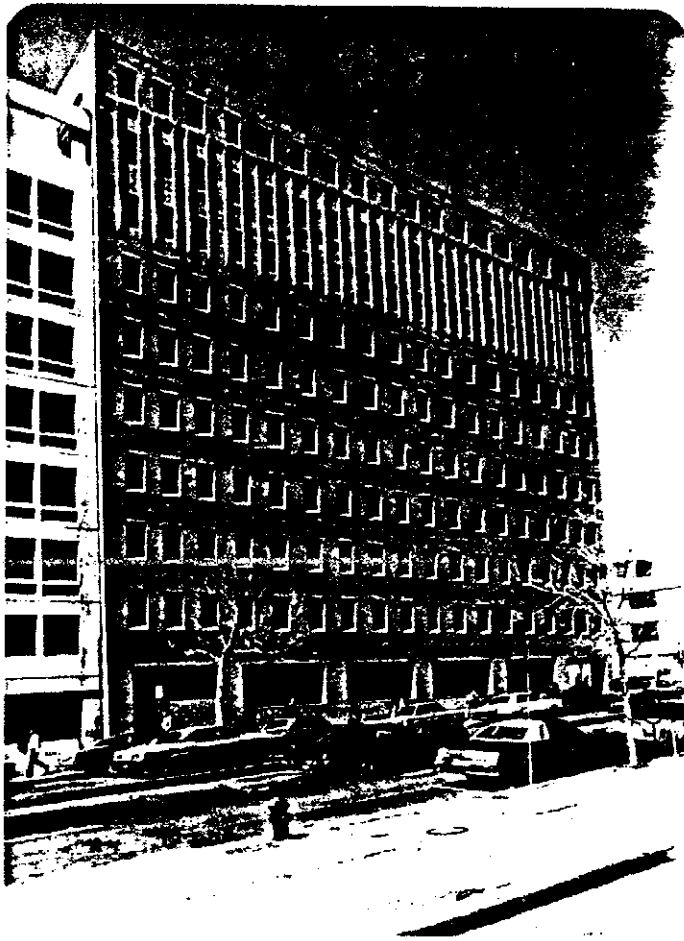
This building was designed in 1975. In most ways it is typical of current speculative office developments. It has a steel skeleton structure with a central service core; open floor plans for leasing flexibility; and utilizes the maximum allowable construction. It constitutes a large volume in the urban fabric. The arcade on the north side might be an amenity in the downtown district, but is underutilized because it does not integrate with the larger axes of pedestrian circulation. Furthermore, this "retreat" of shopfronts located away from the edge of the sidewalk is a device never used in the traditional streetscapes of the district.

The facade treatment appears to be an attempt to integrate the enormous building mass with the smaller scale of the surrounding district. This is accomplished through the use of certain architectural traits characteristic of traditional buildings, especially fenestration of small vertical windows set into a brick wall, and articulation of building height into layers. Unfortunately, these efforts have been futile in visually subdividing the monolithic appearance. The use of traditional-sized windows in a facade plane devoid of vertical articulation emphasizes the uncommon width and height of the structure instead of relating it to the nearby buildings. The slender corbelled piers on the top floors are too thin and short to articulate the facade into the narrow bays that would begin to suggest the more typical buildings widths occurring in the district. Furthermore, the enrichment that this ornamental brickwork provides occurs at too great a distance above the area's typical cornice levels to provide any mutual visual reference. Paradoxically, at street level, the facade is devoid of any careful detailing as well as smaller elements that would visually enliven the pedestrian experience. Finally, the two recessed bays on the north facade are not strong enough in the overwhelming eleven-bay context to provide a subdivision or a proper framing to the facade plane.

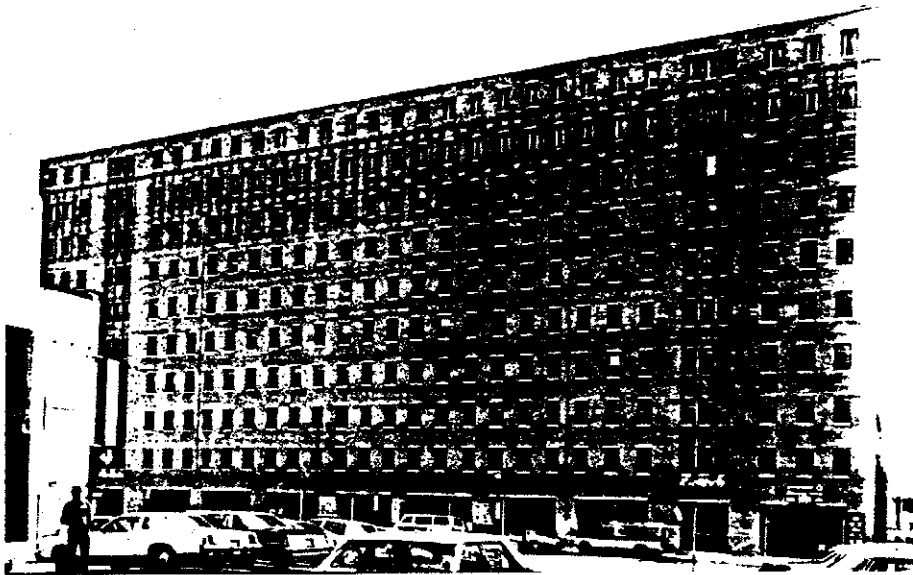
September 1979



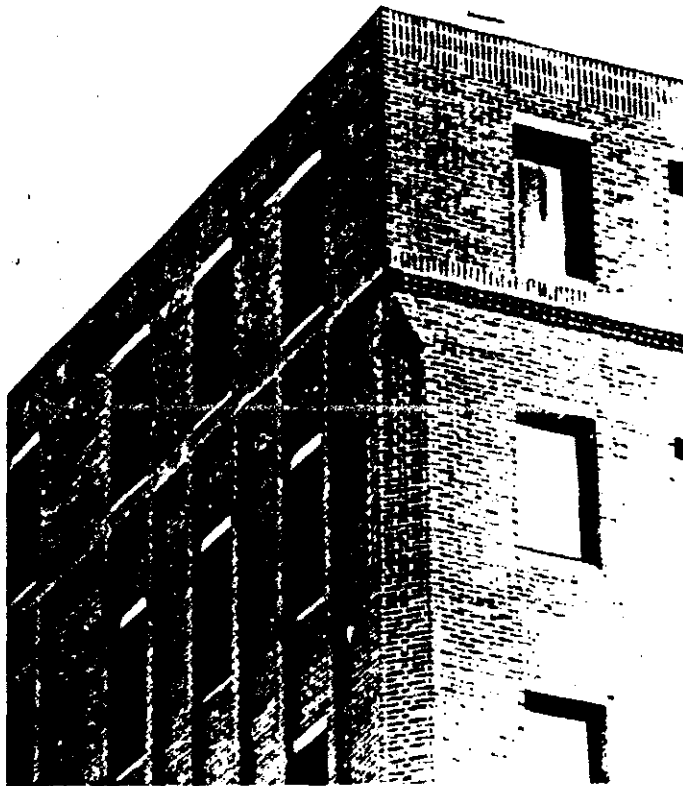
DBLIQUE VIEW DF SIXTH STREET (EAST) AND E STREET (NORTH)  
FACADES



SIXTH STREET (EAST)  
FACADE



E STREET (NORTH) FACADE



FACADE DETAIL: TOP  
FLOORS AT NORTHWEST  
CORNER



FACADE DETAIL: TYPICAL WINDOW TREATMENT

Lot 18  
612, 614 E Street, N.W.

Lot 18, rectangular in shape, measured 52 feet along E Street and 187 feet deep. Lot 18 is situated in the northeast quadrant of Square 457.

1819.....Lot 18 was assessed in two parts to Allan Clark and to James M. Varnum.

1824.....Lot 18 was still assessed in two parts. One part was assessed to O.B. Brown at \$640.00 for the ground and \$150.00 for the improvements to the property. The other part was assessed \$640.00 to James M. Varnum and was assessed \$900.00 for the improvements to the property.

1829/33...Lot 18 was assessed in its entirety to William Benning. The ground was assessed \$2462.00 and the improvements to the property were assessed \$1000.00.

1844.....The assessment of lot 18 was now in the name of Ann Benning. The lot was assessed \$2954.00.

1859.....P.C. McGuire was assessed \$9848.00 for lot 18.

1870.....The assessment of lot 18 rose to \$12,000.00 in the name of Jason McGuire.

1895

to

1918.....Thomas Dowling and Company, auctioneers, was listed as the occupant of 610-612 E Street.

1899/

1900.....Amanda E. Dowling was assessed \$12,210.00 for lot 18. The improvements to the property were assessed at \$10,800.00.

1920

to

1948.....The Young Men's Christian Association occupied the building for twenty-nine years.



1936

to

1943.....The Traveler's Aid Association of Washington, D.C. occupied an office at 610-612 E Street.

1954.....The Otts Service Station managed an auto parking lot at this site.

1956

to

1962.....The District Parking Service managed a parking lot at this site.

1975.....The Bicentennial Building was built.

1981.....The lot is now taken up by the Bicentennial Building which is used by a variety of government agencies. Among them are the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Energy.

Lot 19 (Sublots 831, 848)  
608, 610 E Street, N.W.

Lot 19 is situated in the northeast quadrant of Square 457. Sometime between 1903 and 1919, the lot was subdivided into two smaller lots designated 831 and 848. The eastern lot, or subplot 831 measured approximately 26 feet along E Street side and 187 feet in the north-south direction. Sublot 848, east of subplot 831, measured 26 feet along E Street, and 100 feet deep.

1819.....Lot 19 was assessed in the name of Alexander Kerr according to the District of Columbia Tax Records.

1824.....Alexander Kerr was assessed \$1180.00 for the lot.

1829/33..Alexander Kerr's assessment rose to \$2268.00 for lot 19.

1844.....Lot 19 became subdivided into three parts. One part was assessed \$1241.00 to William H. Campbell. Another part was assessed \$1241.00 to Leonidas Coyle, and the third part was assessed \$241.00 to Andrew Rothwell.

1859.....William H. Campbell was assessed \$4135.00 for the western part of lot 19, and Leonidas was assessed \$4135.00 for the central part of lot 19. The eastern part of the lot was assessed to the O.C. Baptist Church.

1870.....This year lot 19 was assessed in two parts. The western part was assessed to W. Campbell for \$5000.00 and the eastern part was assessed \$5000.00 to the S. Coyle estate.

1878/79..W.H. Campbell's assessment dropped to \$4755.00, as did Leonidas Coyle's assessment.

1883/84..Mary J. Campbell was assessed \$4755.00 for the western part of lot 19. The central portion was assessed to Leonidas Coyle's estate for \$4755.00. The eastern section of lot 19 was assessed \$1003.00 to Oavid Smith, et. al.

Lot 19 (Sublot 831) West  
610 E Street, N.W.

1888.....The city directories list Daniel Odriscoll, an attorney at law, as the tenant of 610 E Street.

1893/94..The tax records indicate that lot 19 was assessed in four parts. The two western lots were assessed to Mary Campbell and Lena Heiting for \$6203.00 and \$6689.00 respectively. Mary Campbell was assessed \$4000.00 for the improvements to the property. Lena Heiting was assessed \$5000.00 for the improvements to the lot.

1897.....William Q. Tune was listed as a patent lawyer occupying an office at 610 E Street, in the city directories.

1922  
to

1967.....The Bedell Manufacturing Company, a mattress store was listed as the occupant of 610 in the city directories.

1981.....The lot is now taken up by the Bicentennial Building built in 1975, which is used by a variety of government agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Energy.

Lot 19 (Sublot 848) East  
608 E Street, N.W.

1892

to

1895.....The District of Columbia city directories indicate that Lena Heitingger operated a boarding house at 608 E Street.

1893/94..Lot 19 was assessed in four parts. The two eastern lots were assessed to Thomas Dowling and David Smith et. al. for \$419.00 and \$1805.00 respectively.

1896

to

1903.....Charles Heitingger was listed as an occupant of 608 E Street in the city directories.

1899/

1900.....Thomas Dowling's assessment dropped to \$377.00. He was assessed \$200.00 for the improvements made to the property. David Smith et. al. were assessed \$1604.00 for their lot.

1905

to

1913.....The Century Supply Company for advertising novelties was listed as the occupant of 608 E Street according to the city directories.

1905

to

1907.....The People's Gas Saving Store for gas appliances was the occupant of 608 E Street for three years.

1906

to

1920.....George W. Heitingger managed an Advertising Novelties store at 608 E Street.

1916

to

1920.....The city directories list the Century Soup Company as one of the tenants of the building.

1921

to

1937.....The Big Four Candy Company occupied a store located at 608 E Street for seventeen years.

1925

to

1967.....608 E Street was an apartment building which housed a number of long term tenants.

1926

to

1943.....Edith Action was a tenant in the building for eighteen years.

1927

to

1943.....The city directories list James B. Sullivan as one of the tenants of the building.

1934

to

1967.....Some of the short term tenants of the building were the following:  
Christos Forment (1934-1935), Pearl Shelsky (1935), Belle Southall (1937), Leo Batten (1940), Mabel Weismer (1942-1943), Freda Barmatz (1948 to 1964), Mildred Lam (1956), Lola Hanson (1956), Brooks Wolfgang (1956), Alberto Larrea (1964), Agnes Armstrong (1964), Lucille Wallace (1967) and Dreama Blevins (1967).

1981.....The lot is occupied by the Bicentennial Building constructed in 1975, which is used by a variety of government agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Energy.

Lot 20 (Sublot 834)  
606 E Street

Lot 20 is situated on the northeast quadrant Square 457. This rectangular lot measures approximately 67 feet along E Street and 100 feet deep. By 1919, the Baist Plat Map indicated that Lot 20 had also been designated 834.

1819.....Lot 20 was under the ownership of Alexander Kerr according to the D. C. Tax Records.

1824.....Alexander Kerr was assessed \$903.00 for Lot 20.

1929/33..Lot 20, still under the ownership of Alexander Kerr, was assessed \$1,505.00.

1844.....The ownership of Lot 20 was transferred to Andrew Rothwell, and he was assessed \$1,806.00 for the lot.

1859.....The D. C. Baptist Church was assessed for Lot 20 according to the D. C. Tax Records.

1878/79..David Smith, et. al represented the D. C. Baptist Church and was assessed \$6,924.00 for the property situated on Lot 20.

1883/84..David Smith's assessment for the D. C. Baptist Church rose to \$7,526.00.

1893/94..The assessment for the Baptist Church rose substantially to \$13,547.00 still under the name of David Smith, et al. The value of improvements to the property was \$40,000.00.

1899/  
1900.....The E Street Baptist Church, situated on Lot 20, was assessed \$12,042.00 and the improvements to the property were valued at \$30,000.00.

1915  
to

1921.....By 1915 the Knights of Columbus had established their hall at 606 E Street.

1922

to

1942.....The City Directories list the Salvation Army Corp No. 1 as the occupant of the building during this time span.

1948.....The Golden Key Club was listed in the City Directories as occupying space in the building.

1954.....The City Directories indicate that Lot 20 was vacant.

1956.....The District Parking Service took over Lot 20 in its entirety, along with the neighboring lots to the east.

1964

to

1967.....The City Directories list the Investment Property Parking as the occupant of the lot.

1975.....The Bicentennial Building, occupying Lots 18, 21, 831, 835, 836 and 848 was built this year.

1981.....The Bicentennial Building is used by a variety of government agencies today. Among them are Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Energy.

-Lot 21  
428-434 6th Street/600-604 E Street

When originally platted (Bastert, 1872) Lot 21 was situated in the northeast corner of Square 457.. A rectangular area, 69' x 75', it had a north-south orientation. By 1887 subdivisions had arisen, primarily oriented east-west (Hopkins Plat Map, 1887). The 1892 Hopkins Map indicated four east-west lots and one area (604 E Street), north-south. Lot 21 had returned to an undivided property by 1957 (Baist Plat Map, 1957).

1819.....George P. Maxwell owned Lot 21 in its entirety.

1824.....At this date in the records the lot was divided into two properties (until 1878/79). One was owned by Ezra J. Ramsey and assessed \$446.00 for the land, \$850.00 for building improvements. The second assessment was to George P. Maxwell, \$308.00 for the lot, \$350.00 for improvements.

1829/33...Ramsey's holding was transferred to G.C. Grammer. He was assessed \$656.00 for the ground, \$2250.00 for improvements. Maxwell's lot value was \$468.00. His improvement value was \$250.00.

1844.....G.C. Grammer was the owner of both properties. One was assessed for \$562.00, the other for \$788.00.

1859.....G.C. Grammer owned Lot 21 in its entirety. This lot value was \$5621.00.

1877.....Henry Freeman owned an upholstery store at 428 6th Street in partnership (1877, Freeman & Eckhardt) and privately (1878 to 1886). A grocer, Thomas J. Phillips, operated his store at 434 6th Street.

1878/79...Christopher C. Grammer, W.B. Todd and E. Thorton, in trust, were the owners of Lot 21. The lot was assessed for \$7195.00. Until 1891, 430 6th Street had been occupied by tailors, including Edward Spies Edward G. Bartholomew, and Michael Horn.

1883/84...Christopher C. Grammer's lot was valued at \$6746.00.

Until 1890, Catherine Kerr had a grocery store at 432 6th Street.

1893/94  
and  
1899/

1900.....Grammer, Todd, and Thorton, in trust, were assessed \$11,243.00 for Lot 21. The value of improvements was not recorded.



1906

to

1967.....There were no listings for the 434 6th Street building.

1907

to

1908.....Howard T. Jones sold auto accessories at 602-604 E Street.

1908

to

1934.....Ferdinand Erhardt was the tenant of 430 6th Street. He was a cabinet-maker by profession. In 1913 Charles Erhardt took over the business.

1909.....Joseph Wilner, Samuel Glass and Gilbert Torchinsky were tailors at 600 E Street, until 1937. 602 E Street had been used as a dining room until 1919.

1910

to

1940.....Lee Hen, a launderer, was named in the Directories at 432 6th Street. The laundry business was managed by Sam Moy in 1922.

1918

to

1932.....Harry T. Taylor, a tailor, was established at 428 6th Street.

1940

to

1954.....A barbershop was run by Benjamin Cioliola at 430 6th Street.

1956

to

1967.....Since 1923 the 600-606 lot had been used by auto repair shops and garages. From the late 1950's District Parking, followed by Investment Property (parking services), were situated on the site. There were no listings in the City Directories for the buildings at 428, 430, 432 and 434 6th Street.

1981.....Lot 21, in its entirety, is included on the site of the Bicentennial Building.

Lot 22  
422-426 6th Street

When originally platted on the 1872 Bastert Map, Lot 22 was an L-shaped area located in a northeast quadrant of the Square. Part of the western border was exposed to a public alley.

1819.....Brook Edmonson owned Lot 22.

1824.....Brook Edmonson's heirs were assessed \$592.00 for the lot and \$900.00 for improvements made to the structure.

1829/33...The owners were unchanged. \$789.00 was the lot value. \$2150.00 was the building improvement value.

1844.....\$1065.00 was the lot assessment to Brook Edmonson's heirs.

1859.....At this date in the Tax Assessment Records the lot was divided into northern and southern properties. Therefore, these areas have been treated individually from this time.

Lot 22 South (Sublot 836)  
422 6th Street

According to the 1859 Tax Assessment Record, the southern part of original Lot 22 had a Sixth Street frontage of 14.8'. The area was named No. 836 on the 8aist Plat Map, 1919.

1859.....William Bryan was the owner. He was assessed \$1390.00 for the property.

1870.....No lot value was given. The improvement value was \$2000.00. S. Aigler had become the landholder.

1878/79...Philip May, in trust, and S. Aigler were assessed \$1807.00 for the land.

1883/84...The owners were unchanged. A decrease in the lot value, to \$1599.00, was recorded.

1893/94...Sophia Aigler was assessed \$2433.00 for the ground and \$1600.00 for improvements to the structure.

1899/  
to

1900.....The lot value reached a high of \$2363.00. The building improvement value was \$1200.00. The proprietorship was still in the name of Sophia Aigler.

1903.....Directory listings began from this date. C.C. Merritt, a claim agent, and Robert A. Dick, a lawyer, were established at this address.

1915  
to

1954.....Dwellers were named in the Directories. Most often listed were Goldie Stein (1928 to 1936) and Linnie N. Seagraves (1942 to 1950).

1960.....Green's liquors was located at 422 6th Street.

1975  
to

1981.....The Bicentennial Building was designed in 1975 and presently occupies seven lots in the northeast quadrant of the Square.

Lot 22 North (Sublot 835)  
426 6th Street

The northern section of Lot 22 was an L-shaped lot situated in a northeast corner of Square 457. It had a Seventh Street frontage of 36.4' (Tax Assessment Records, 1859). A small part of its western border was exposed to a public alley.

1859.....The northern part of the lot was titled to David Saunders. He was assessed \$2810.00 for the land.

1870.....David S. Stewart was the new lot owner. A land value was not given in this year, but the improvement value was \$6500.00.

1878/79...The lot, held by Stewart, was assessed for \$3577.00.

1883/84...The value of the lot dropped to \$3066.00. Stewart still owned the property.

1893/94...A change in ownership had occurred, to Robert White. He was assessed \$5110.00 for the ground, \$5000.00 for improvements.

1899/

1900...The owner and lot value were unchanged from the previous record. The building improvement value was \$3500.00.

1915.....Tenant listings first appeared in the City Directories from this date. Fred T. White was named until 1928.

1929

to

1949.....The Division Headquarters of the Salvation Army was listed. Between 1934 and 1949 the address was 426-428 6th Street.

1950

to

1954.....The building was vacant.

1975.....The Bicentennial Building was built.

1981.....The northern section of Lot 22 is included on the site of the Bicentennial Building.

## SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas

Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps

Boyd's City Directories

District of Columbia Building Permits

District of Columbia General Assessment Records

District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds

District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records

District of Columbia Tax Records

Hopkins Real Estate Atlas

Polk's City Directories

Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment  
Land Agency

Sanborn Insurance Map